

Lakewood, CA - Rep. Linda Sánchez, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, urged Californians to take full advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on a conference call today with local reporters and IRS Director Julie Garcia. Rep. Sánchez and Ms. Garcia highlighted EITC and the availability of free tax assistance locations available to members of the community.

“With tax season underway, I want to make sure those who are eligible apply for their EITC benefits,” said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez. “Too many low-income, and not so low-income, working families are missing out on hundreds, even thousands of dollars each year simply because they don’t file for the EITC and don’t collect the full amount of the tax refund they earned.”

Every year, millions of workers are eligible for, but fail to claim, their EITC, a federal tax credit designed for low-income wage earners. Those who qualify for the EITC could pay less in taxes, pay no tax at all, or even get a tax refund. The IRS estimates that 20 to 25 percent of EITC-eligible workers, or 5-7 million people, fail to claim this tax benefit each year. EITC amounts vary from \$438 to \$4,824, with an average EITC of \$2,000.

“An estimated 10,000 people in the Long Beach area who are eligible for the EITC don’t file for it, and are losing out on this credit,” continued Congresswoman Sánchez. “If everyone in our part of southeast L.A. County eligible for the credit actually filed for it, it would mean over \$20 million in extra income for working families. This is money that could help with gas, groceries, or education. More money in your pocket means more money to stimulate local businesses that keep our local economy going and jobs in place.”

Families earning up to \$41,646 in 2008 will qualify for the EITC, depending on their number of children and their filing status. Single workers and those without children are also eligible. Workers who don’t owe taxes or who aren’t required to file a tax return are also eligible but they must file a federal return and fill out EIC questions to receive the credit.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit can be a boost for working families,” said Julie Garcia, Director of Stakeholder Partnerships, Education & Communication (SPEC). “At the IRS, we want all eligible taxpayers to claim this benefit. My thanks go to Congresswoman Sánchez and the southern California volunteers for all their hard work and support of this program.”

For more information on the EITC or a list of free tax assistance locations, please visit Congresswoman Linda Sánchez’ website: www.lindasanchez.house.gov.

Information about EITC eligibility requirements can also be found at www.irs.gov.